

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) An electronic rebate system configured for processing a manufacturer's rebate that is provided to a purchaser of a product, said system comprising:

at least one electronic tag device associated with products made available for purchase, wherein each distinct product has at least one electronic tag physically connected thereto, and wherein said electronic tag stores product-identification-information;

at least one electronic reading device configured to retrieve information from said electronic tag;

a first computer in communication with said electronic reading device to retrieve said product-identification-information stored in the electronic tag associated with a product being purchased by a customer at a point of sale and for which a manufacturer's rebate applies solely as a result of purchase of the product;

said first computer further configured to use said product-identification-information to acquire rebate-claim-information so that the customer may receive the manufacturer's rebate;

said first computer further configured to communicate with a second computer and to transfer to said second computer said rebate-claim-information and wherein said transfer occurs substantially contemporaneous with the purchase; and

wherein said second computer is configured to process and validate a rebate claim with said rebate-claim-information, and transfer rebate-claim-status information to said first computer, said first computer configured to communicate said rebate-claim-status information to the customer.

2. (Original) An electronic rebate system as in claim 1, wherein said electronic tag device is an RFID smart tag.

3. (Original) An electronic rebate system as in claim 1, wherein said electronic reading device is an RFID STR device.

4. (Previously Presented) An electronic rebate system as in claim 1, further comprising a customer interface configured with said first computer to receive and communicate said rebate-claim-status information to the customer.
5. (Previously Presented) An electronic rebate system as in claim 4, wherein said rebate-claim-status information is one of real-time information and near real-time information.
6. (Original) An electronic rebate system as in claim 1, wherein said product-identification-information comprises at least one member from the group consisting of: (a) product model number; (b) product serial number; (c) rebate promotion code; (d) product name; (e) identification code; (f) proof-of-purchase code; and (g) an electronic address.
7. (Original) An electronic rebate system as in claim 1, wherein said rebate-claim-information comprises at least one member from the group consisting of: (a) customer name; (b) customer's financial institution tracking number; (c) customer's account number at customer's financial institution; (d) customer's mailing address; (e) customer's e-mail address; (f) customer's phone number; (g) customer's credit card number; (h) customer's debit card number; (i) a pin code; (j) an authorization code; (k) customer's electronic signature; (l) product model number; (m) product serial number; (n) rebate promotion code; (o) product name; (p) an electronic address; (q) proof-of-purchase code; (r) date of purchase; (s) time of purchase; (t) product identification code; (u) product information; (v) retailer name; (w) retailer location; (x) retailer identification code; and (y) transaction code.
8. (Canceled).
9. (Previously Presented) An electronic rebate system as in claim 1, wherein said first computer is further configured to generate at least one of (a) rebate status documentation comprising at least part of said rebate status information wherein said rebate status documentation is given to the customer at the point of sale and (b) a

receipt comprising at least part of said rebate status information wherein said receipt is given to the customer at the point of sale.

10. (Previously Presented) An electronic rebate system as in claim 1, wherein said rebate status information comprises at least one member from the group consisting of: (a) rebate claim accepted notice; (b) rebate claim denied notice; (c) rebate claim denied code; (d) rebate claim reference code; (e) EFT transaction code; (g) e-mail notice; and (h) rebate check number.

11. (Original) An electronic rebate system as in claim 1, wherein said first computer is a retailer central computer.

12. (Original) An electronic rebate system as in claim 11, wherein said second computer is one of (a) a manufacturer central computer and (b) a rebate processing center central computer.

13-21. (Canceled).

22. (Previously Presented) An electronic rebate system as in claim 1, further comprising a portable customer computer in communication with said first computer a wireless communication connection for communicating said rebate-claim-status information.

23. (Canceled).

24. (Previously Presented) An electronic rebate system as in claim 11, wherein said second computer is further configured to initiate an electronic fund transfer from a first bank account into a second bank account in the amount of the rebate.

25. (Canceled).

26. (Previously Presented) An electronic rebate system as in claim 1, wherein said first or second computer is configured to transmit an electronic mail message to a

predefined electronic mail address wherein said electronic mail message contains at least part of said rebate-claim-status information.

27. (Previously Presented) A method for electronically making a claim for a manufacturer's rebate that is provided by a manufacturer upon purchase of a product, said method comprising:

- providing at least one electronic reading device configured to retrieve product-information stored in an electronic tag physically connected with a purchased product at the point of sale of the product;

- configuring a first computer to communicate with said electronic reading device to retrieve at least part of said product-information stored in the electronic tag associated with the product being purchased by a customer at a point of sale thereby acquiring product-identification-information;

- configuring said first computer to acquire rebate-claim-information for making a claim for the manufacturer's rebate available to the customer solely for purchase of the product using at least part of said product-identification-information;

- configuring said first computer to initiate a data transfer of said rebate-claim-information to a second computer; and

- configuring said second computer to process and validate the rebate claim with said rebate-claim-information, and transfer rebate-claim-status information to said first computer, said first computer further configured to communicate said rebate-claim-status information to the customer.

28. (Original) A method for electronically making a rebate claim as in claim 27, wherein said electronic tag device is an RFID smart tag.

29. (Original) A method for electronically making a rebate claim as in claim 27, wherein said electronic reading device is an RFID STR device.

30. (Original) A method for electronically making a rebate claim as in claim 27, wherein said first computer is a retailer central computer.

31. (Original) A method for electronically making a rebate claim as in claim 27, wherein said second computer is one of a manufacturer central computer and a third party computer.

32. (Original) A method for electronically making a rebate claim as in claim 27, wherein said product-identification-information comprises at least one member from the group consisting of: (a) product model number; (b) product serial number; (c) rebate promotion code; (d) product name; (e) identification code; (f) proof-of-purchase code; (g) an electronic address; and (f) a URL link.

33. (Original) A method for electronically making a rebate claim as in claim 27, wherein said rebate-claim-information comprises at least one member from the group consisting of: (a) customer name; (b) a financial institution tracking number; (c) an account number at a financial institution; (d) customer's mailing address; (e) customer's e-mail address; (f) customer's phone number; (g) customer's credit card number; (h) customer's debit card number; (i) a pin code; (j) an authorization code; (k) customer's electronic signature; (l) product model number; (m) product serial number; (n) rebate promotion code; (o) product name; (p) an electronic address; (q) proof-of-purchase code; (r) date of purchase; (s) time of purchase; (t) product identification code; (u) product information; (v) retailer name; (w) retailer location; (x) retailer identification code; and (y) transaction code.

34. (Canceled).

35. (Previously Presented) A method for electronically making a rebate claim as in claim 27, wherein said rebate status information comprises at least one member from the group consisting of: (a) rebate accepted notice; (b) rebate denied notice; (c) rebate denied code; (d) rebate reference code; (e) EFT transaction code; (f) e-mail notification notice; and (h) rebate check number.

36. (Previously Presented) A method for electronically making a rebate claim as in claim 27, wherein said first computer is further configured to generate at least one of (a)

rebate status documentation and (b) a receipt, wherein said rebated status documentation and said receipt comprise at least part of said rebate status information and is given to said customer at said point of sale.

37-65. (Canceled).